

## **ST. PHILARET OF NEW YORK AND THE HERESY OF ECUMENISM**

When St. Philaret became Metropolitan of New York, he was hardly known outside China and Australia. And yet his career was already one of immense courage and holiness. In the 1940s he had suffered torture at the hands of the Japanese for refusing to bow to an idol in Harbin; in 1945 he was the only clergyman in the city who refused to accept a Soviet passport or commemorate the Soviet authorities that now took control of China; and in the 1950s he was subjected to torture by the Chinese communists, who unsuccessfully tried to blow him up but left him permanently injured.

Involuntarily, after 1945 he found himself in the Moscow Patriarchate. But this burdened his conscience greatly, and he continued to denounce the Soviet Antichrist. Finally he got his chance to escape the nets of the communists and Soviet church: in 1961 he was able to leave China.

“When, finally, with the help of God I managed to extract myself from red China, the first thing I did was turn to the First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, Metropolitan Anastasy, with a request that he consider me again to be in the jurisdiction of the Russian Church Abroad. Vladyka Metropolitan replied with mercy and love, and immediately blessed me to serve in Hong Kong already as a priest of the Synodal jurisdiction, and pointed out that every church server passing into this jurisdiction from the jurisdiction of Moscow must give a special penitential declaration to the effect that he is sorry about his (albeit involuntary) stay in the Moscow jurisdiction. I did this immediately.”

Soon Archimandrite Philaret flew to Sydney. The ruling Archbishop of Australia accepted him with joy and love, and already in the first weeks of Fr. Philaret’s stay in Australia began to speak about the possibility of ordaining him as a Bishop. In 1963 he was ordained Bishop of Brisbane, a vicariate of the Australian diocese.

On May 14/27, 1964, Metropolitan Anastasy of New York retired (he died in 1965). There were two candidates to succeed him: Archbishop John of San Francisco, the famous wonderworker, and Archbishop Nikon of Washington. Opinion was equally divided between the two candidates, and feelings were so strong that a schism loomed. But then it was suggested that the Council adjourn for three days of fasting and prayer. At the end of the three-day fast Archbishop John suggested the candidature of Bishop Philaret. Although St. Philaret was hardly known to anybody there, the suggestion was unanimously and joyfully accepted.

The new metropolitan faced a daunting task. For he had, on the one hand, to lead his Church in decisively denouncing the apostasy of World Orthodoxy, communion with which could no longer be tolerated. And on the other, he had to preserve unity among the members of his own Synod, some of whom were in spirit closer to “World Orthodoxy” than True Orthodoxy...

## *The Sorrowful Epistles*

Already in his 1965 Epistle “to Orthodox Bishops and all who hold dear the Fate of the Russian Church”, St. Philaret gave clear signs that he was going to adopt a more uncompromising approach in relation to the MP than his predecessors. This Epistle was also significant for the much more prominent position attributed to the Catacomb Church than during the time of his predecessor, which was declared to be a “sister-Church” of the Russian Church Abroad. This prominence given to the Catacomb Church by Metropolitan Philaret was timely. The True Orthodox Christians inside the Soviet Union were going through a very difficult period. True bishops were exceedingly few: Schema-Bishop Peter (Ladygin) of Nizhegorod died in Glazov in 1957, leaving no successor, as did Bishop Barnabas (Belyaev) of Pechersk in Kiev in 1963 and Bishop Michael (Yershov) of Chistopol in the Mordovian camps in 1974. Catacomb priests served their widely scattered flocks in the greatest secrecy without any archpastoral support. Many now began to commemorate the first-hierarchs of the Russian Church Abroad, who thereby became de facto the leaders of the whole of the Russian Church...

Another, very pressing task was to defend Orthodoxy against the heresy of ecumenism. Since the founding of the World Council of Churches in 1948, the leader of the ecumenical movement on the Orthodox side had been the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras. On January 5 and 6, 1964, he and Pope Paul VI met in Jerusalem and prayed together. This was a clear transgression of the canons concerning relations with heretics (Apostolic canon 45). On January 23 / February 5, 1964 a large number of Athonite monks, including the abbots of four monasteries, protested against this ecumenical activity: “the undersigned Fathers of the Holy Mountain, abbots, priest-monks and monks, learning of the recent machinations and plots against our blameless Orthodox Faith by the Papal insurrection and of the pro-uniatic actions and statements of the Ecumenical Patriarch and his co-workers, do proclaim with a stentorian voice that we denounce these uniatic tendencies and leanings, and remain steadfast and unshaken in our Orthodox Faith...”<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, however, this “stentorian voice” became more and more muted, until only the Monastery of Esphigmenou remained out of communion of the Ecumenical Patriarchate...

Further intense activity by Patriarch Athenagoras and Archbishop James of the American Archdiocese led, on December 7, 1965, to the “lifting of the anathemas” of 1054 between Orthodoxy and the Papacy. The announcement was made simultaneously in Rome and Constantinople. It included the following words: “Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I with his synod, in common agreement, declare that: a) They regret the offensive words, the reproaches without foundation, and the reprehensible gestures which, on both sides, have marked or accompanied the sad events of this period [viz. in the 11<sup>th</sup> century]. b) They likewise regret and remove

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<sup>1</sup> Proclamation of the Holy Mountain, in Alexander Kalomiros, *Against False Union*, Seattle: St. Nectarios Press, 2000, p. 101.

both from memory and from the midst of the Church the sentences of excommunication which followed these events, the memory of which has influenced actions up to our day and has hindered closer relations in charity; and they commit these excommunications to oblivion. We must recognize that the sentences were directed at particular persons and not at the Churches, and did not aim to break ecclesiastical communion between the sees of Rome and Constantinople.”<sup>2</sup>

“In short,” writes Peter Hebblethwaite in his biography of Paul VI, “1054 had been an accident, much ado about nothing very much, frozen into permanent schism only by later ‘non-theological’ events.”<sup>3</sup> However, this was historically inaccurate: both sees recognized in 1054 that a break in ecclesiastical communion had taken place between them. Moreover, in saying that the schism of 1054 was based on “reproaches without foundation”, the Patriarch was in effect saying that the Papacy was not, or never had been, heretical – although the Papacy had renounced none of its heresies, and Pope Paul VI had reasserted papal infallibility as recently as Vatican II. Thirdly, while relations with excommunicated individuals or Churches can be restored if those individuals or Churches repent, anathemas against heresies cannot be removed insofar as a heresy remains a heresy forever. And yet in December of 1968 Athenagoras announced that he had inserted Pope Paul VI’s name into the Diptychs, thereby signifying that the Pope was not a heretic and was in communion with the Orthodox Church. And he made the following formal renunciation of True Christianity: “We must pray and struggle that Jerusalem becomes a place of dialogue and peace. So that together we may prepare the way for the return of Jesus, the Mahdi of Islam, the Moshiah [Messiah] of Israel, our Lord”.

The Russian Church Outside Russia (ROCOR) had three observers at the Second Vatican Council who witnessed the ceremony of the “lifting of the anathemas”. One of them, Archimandrite Ambrose (Pogodin), after describing the ceremony with evident sympathy, wrote: “The Russian Church Abroad did not recognize the actions of Patriarch Athenagoras, considering that the patriarch was obliged to do this only with the agreement of all the Orthodox Churches, because the matter of the schism between the Eastern and Western Churches concerned all the Orthodox Churches – it was not only the personal relations between the Pope and the Patriarch of Constantinople. We, observers from the Russian Church Abroad, received by telephone the order from our ecclesiastical authorities not to be present at the ceremony of the mutual lifting of the anathemas between the Constantinopolitan and Roman Churches. But we, having taken counsel amongst ourselves, thought that such a demonstration would have been harmful for our Church, which we represented with dignity. However, our demonstration would have remained unnoticed: what would the absence of three people in a mass of tens of thousands of people signify?!”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Full text in *Eastern Churches Review*, vol. I, № 1, Spring, 1966, pp. 49-50.

<sup>3</sup> Hebblethwaite, *Paul VI: The First Modern Pope*, 1993; in Fr. Alexey Young, *The Rush to Embrace*, Richfield Springs: Nikodemos Orthodox Publication Society, 1996, p. 63.

<sup>4</sup> Pogodin, “O Chine Priniatia v Pravoslavnuu Tserkov” (On the Rite of Reception into the Orthodox Church).

At this critical moment, on December 15, 1965, Metropolitan Philaret issued the first of a series of "Sorrowful Epistles" designed to warn the Orthodox against ecumenism.<sup>5</sup> He wrote to Patriarch Athenagoras protesting against his action: "The organic belonging of the Orthodox to the union of the contemporary heretics does not sanctify the latter, while it tears away the Orthodox entering into it from Catholic Orthodox Unity... Your gesture puts a sign of equality between error and truth. For centuries all the Orthodox Churches believed with good reasons that it has violated no doctrine of the Holy Ecumenical Councils; whereas the Church of Rome has introduced a number of innovations in its dogmatic teaching. The more such innovations were introduced, the deeper was to become the separation between the East and the West. The doctrinal deviations of Rome in the eleventh century did not yet contain the errors that were added later. Therefore the cancellation of the mutual excommunication of 1054 could have been of meaning at that time, but now it is only evidence of indifference in regard to the most important errors, namely new doctrines foreign to the ancient Church, of which some, having been exposed by St. Mark of Ephesus, were the reason why the Church rejected the Union of Florence... No union of the Roman Church with us is possible until it renounces its new doctrines, and no communion in prayer can be restored with it without a decision of all the Churches, which, however, can hardly be possible before the liberation of the Church of Russia which at present has to live in the catacombs... A true dialogue implies an exchange of views with a possibility of persuading the participants to attain an agreement. As one can perceive from the Encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*, Pope Paul VI understands the dialogue as a plan for our union with Rome with the help of some formula which would, however, leave unaltered its doctrines, and particularly its dogmatic doctrine about the position of the Pope in the Church. However, any compromise with error is foreign to the history of the Orthodox Church and to the essence of the Church. It could not bring a harmony in the confessions of the Faith, but only an illusory outward unity similar to the conciliation of dissident Protestant communities in the ecumenical movement."<sup>6</sup>

Tatiana (now Nun Cassia) Senina writes: "Metropolitan Philaret sent a similar address to another leader of the ecumenical movement – the American Archbishop James. However, the apostate hierarchs paid no attention to his exhortations. The ecumenical movement continued to gather speed. The holy Hierarch Philaret looked with sorrow on the falling away from the faith of the once Orthodox Churches. And he called the epistles which he sent to all the hierarchs of the Orthodox Church just that – 'Sorrowful Epistles'. In his first Epistle, written in 1969, St. Philaret says that he has decided to turn to all the hierarchs, 'some of whom occupy the oldest and most glorious sees', because, in the words of St. Gregory the Theologian, 'the truth is betrayed by silence', and it is impossible to keep silent when you see a deviation

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<sup>5</sup> It was claimed by Matushka Anastasia Shatilova that the Sorrowful Epistles were in fact written by her father, Protopresbyter George (later Bishop Gregory) Grabbe. See Andrei Psarev, "The Development of Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia's Attitude Toward Other Local Orthodox Churches", [http://www.sobor2006.com/prINTERfriendly2.php?id=119\\_0\\_3\\_0](http://www.sobor2006.com/prINTERfriendly2.php?id=119_0_3_0), p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Full text in Ivan Ostroumoff, *The History of the Council of Florence*, pp. 193-199.

from the purity of Orthodoxy – after all, every bishop at his ordination gives a promise to keep the Faith and the canons of the holy fathers and defend Orthodoxy from heresies. Vladyka quotes various ecumenist declarations of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and clearly shows, on the basis of the patristic teaching and the canons, that the position of the WCC has nothing in common with Orthodoxy, and consequently the Orthodox Churches must not participate in the work of this council. The holy Hierarch Philaret also emphasises that the voice of the MP is not the voice of the True Russian Church, which in the homeland is persecuted and hides in the catacombs. Vladyka calls on all the Orthodox hierarchs to stand up in defence of the purity of Orthodoxy.

“Vladyka Philaret wrote his second ‘Sorrowful Epistle’ on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, 1972. In it he noted that although in the last two years hierarchs had made declarations about the heterodoxy of the ecumenical movement, not one Orthodox Church had declared that it was leaving the WCC. Vladyka placed as the aim of his Second Epistle ‘to show that abyss of heresy against the very concept of the Church into which all the participants in the ecumenical movement are being drawn’. He recalled the threatening prophecy of the Apostle Paul that to those who will not receive ‘the love of the truth for salvation’ the Lord will send ‘strong delusion, that they should believe a lie. That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness’ (II Thessalonians 2.10-12). St. Philaret’s third Epistle was devoted to the so-called ‘Thyateira Confession’ of Metropolitan Athenagoras [of Thyateira and Great Britain], the exarch of the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate in Europe – a document written in a completely heretical spirit, but which did not elicit any reaction from the leaders of the ‘official churches’. Evidently Vladyka Philaret hoped at the beginning that at any rate one of the bishops of ‘World Orthodoxy’ might listen to his words, which is why he addressed them in his epistles as true Archpastors of the Church. Besides, attempts at exhortation corresponded to the apostolic command: ‘A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself’ (Titus 3. 10-11). It was fitting, before accepting an anathema against the apostates, to try and convert them from their error.

“Alas, no conversion took place, and the ecumenical impiety continued to pour out. Vladyka addressed his word not only to bishops, but also to their flock, untiringly explaining the danger of the new heresy. While telling about the zeal of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, who slapped the face of Arius when he blasphemed against the Son of God, Vladyka said: ‘O how often we do not have enough of such zeal when it is really necessary to speak for the insulted and trodden-on truth! I want to tell you about one incident that took place not long ago and which it would have been difficult even to imagine several years ago – and now we are going further and further downhill all the time. One man came from Paris and said that the following incident had taken place at a so-called “ecumenical meeting’. Of course, you know what ecumenism is; it is *the heresy of heresies*. It wants to completely wipe out the concept of the Orthodox Church as the guardian of the Truth, and to create some kind of new, strange church. And so there took place this ‘ecumenical

meeting'. Present were a so-called Orthodox protopriest from the Paris Theological (more exactly, heretical) Institute, a Jewish rabbi, a pastor and a Catholic priest. At first they sort of prayed, and then began the speeches. And then (forgive me for saying such things from the holy ambon, but I want to show you what we have come to) the Jewish rabbi said that the Lord Jesus Christ was the illegitimate son of a dissolute woman...

“But that’s not the main horror. The Jewish people has opposed God for a long time... - so there’s nothing surprising in this. But the horror was that when he said this *everyone* was silent. Later, a man who had heard this terrible blasphemy asked the ‘Orthodox’ protopriest: ‘How could you keep silent?’ He replied: ‘I didn’t want to offend this Jew.’ It’s wrong to offend a Jew, but to insult the All-Pure Virgin Mary is permitted! Look at the state we have come to! How often does it happen to us all now that we do not have the zeal to stand up, when necessary, in defence of our holy things! The Orthodox cleric must zealously stand up against blasphemy, just as the holy Hierarch Nicholas stopped the mouth of the heretic... But now, unfortunately, we have become, as the saying goes, ‘shamefully indifferent to both the evil and the good’. And it is precisely in the soil of this indifference, of a kind of feeling of self-preservation, that the heresy of ecumenism has established itself – as also apostasy, that falling away which is becoming more and more evident... Let us remember, brethren, that Christian love embraces all in itself, is compassionate to all, wishes that all be saved and is sorry for, and merciful to, and love every creature of God; but where it sees a conscious assault on the truth it turns into fiery zeal which cannot bear any such blasphemy... And so must it always be, because every Orthodox Christian must always be zealous for God.”<sup>7</sup>

### *The Fall of the Serbian Church*

Another pressing problem that faced St. Philaret was to define the relationship of ROCOR to the Serbian patriarchate. The relationship between ROCOR and the Serbs had traditionally been very close because of the hospitality extended by the Serbs to ROCOR in the inter-war years. However, important changes in the Serbian Church now necessitated a change in the relationship. For From the time of the election of Patriarch German in 1958, and with the exception of a very few clergy, the communists were in complete control of the Serbian Patriarchate. German himself was well-known as being a member of the communist party of Yugoslavia...

The Serbian theologian Archimandrite Justin Popovich wrote on the catastrophic situation of his Church at this time: “The Church is being gradually destroyed from within and without, ideologically and organisationally. All means are being used: known and unknown, open and secret, the most subtle and the most crude... And all this is skilfully dissolved, but in fact it is the most deadly of poisons with a sugar coating... The most elementary and rudimentary logic demonstrates and proves: cooperation with open atheists, the cursed enemies of Christ and the Orthodox Church of Christ, is illogical and anti-logical. We ask those who seek such

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<sup>7</sup> Senina, “And his lot is among the saints...”, *Vertograd-Inform*, № 15, January, 2000, pp. 15-17.

cooperation, or already cooperate, or – terrible thought! – compel others to cooperate, with the words of Christ: ‘What communion can there be between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what is there in common between light and darkness? What agreement can there be between Christ and Belial?’ (II Corinthians 6.14-15). Do you not hear the Christ-bearing Apostle, who thunders: ‘If we, or an angel from heaven begins to preach to you that which we have not preached to you, let him be anathema!’ (Galatians 1.8). Or have you, in the frenzy of the atheist dictatorship, gone completely deaf to the Divine truth and commandment of Christ: ‘You cannot serve God and Mammon’ (Matthew 6.24)?”<sup>8</sup>

The result of the subjection of the Serbian Church to the communists was predictable: “an alarming tendency on the part of the hierarchy of the ‘Mother Church’ to abandon true Orthodoxy and embrace heresy... the worst heresy that has ever assaulted the Orthodox Church – the heresy of ‘ecumenism’.”<sup>9</sup> In 1965 the Serbian Church entered the World Council of Churches. In September, 1966, two inter-Orthodox Commissions were established in Belgrade to negotiate with the Anglicans and the Old Catholics. In 1967 Patriarch German said to the Roman Catholic bishop of Mostar: “The times are such that our sister Churches have to lean on each other, to turn away from that which divided us and to concentrate on all that we have in common.”<sup>10</sup> The next year he recognized Catholic marriages, and became one of the presidents of the WCC. In 1985, at a nuns’ conference, he welcomed two Catholic bishops “with special honour” into the sanctuary, and then all the conference members (Orthodox, Catholics and Protestants) recited the Creed together in the Liturgy.<sup>11</sup> In 1971 he signed the following WCC statement in Geneva: “The powerful Breath of renewal will blow into the mighty arena of the Church, as well as into each of her communities; for these are not simple administrative units, but they all constitute a part of the one great Christian Church.”

Patriarch German liked to justify his ecumenism by quoting the Serbian proverb: Drvo se na drvo naslanja; a covek na coveka – “Tree leans on tree and man on man.” But the Free Serbs had an answer to this. “We can also quote the proverbs of our

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<sup>8</sup> Popovich, in *Vestnik Germanskoj Eparkhii Russkoj Tserkvi za Granitsei* (*Herald of the German Diocese of the Russian Church Abroad*), № 3, 1992, pp. 15, 16.

<sup>9</sup> *A Time to Choose*, Libertyville, Ill., 1982, p. 43.

<sup>10</sup> Joachim Wertz has provided another possible motive for the Serbian Church’s entry into the WCC. He considers that “the main ‘practical’ reason why the Serbian Orthodox Church joined the WCC was that that body would provide the Serbian Church with visibility in the West and thus forestall any liquidation of the Church by Tito. Also the WCC would contribute to the rebuilding of many of the churches destroyed by the Croatian Ustasha in WWII. The rebuilding of these Churches was very high on the agenda of the Serbian Church. The Croats wanted to erase the presence of Orthodoxy. The Serbian Church felt it imperative to bring back that presence and VISIBILITY. Similarly the WCC, and individual Western protestant Churches contributed to the building of the new Theological Faculty in the Karaburma section of Belgrade. This can be viewed as a posthumous slap in the face of Tito, who forbade the construction of any church in that neighborhood. He wanted it to be an ideal progressive, socialist community of ugly high rise apartments with no trace of the Church.” (“Re: [orthodox-synod] Strange letter”, [orthodox-synod@yahoogroups.com](mailto:orthodox-synod@yahoogroups.com), 26 February, 2003).

<sup>11</sup> John Chaplain, “[paradosis] Re: Serbian Church – another item”, [orthodox-tradition@yahoogroups.com](mailto:orthodox-tradition@yahoogroups.com), 26 May, 2004.

people: S'kim si, onaki si. – 'You are like those with whom you associate.' If you find your fellowship with heretics, you begin to share their erroneous thinking and eventually become a heretic. As an American proverb goes: 'Birds of a feather flock together.'"<sup>12</sup>

Commenting on the decision of the Orthodox Churches to become "organic members" of the WCC, Fr. Justin wrote: "Every true Orthodox Christian, who is instructed under the guidance of the Holy Fathers, is overcome with shame when he reads that the Orthodox members of the Fifth Pan-Orthodox Conference in Geneva [in June, 1968]... on the question of the participation of the Orthodox in the work of the World Council of Churches, considered it necessary 'to declare that the Orthodox Church considers itself to be an organic part of the World Council of Churches.'

"This assertion is apocalyptically horrifying in its un-orthodoxy and anti-orthodoxy. Was it necessary for the Orthodox Church, that most holy Body of the God-Man Christ, to become so debased to such a pitiful degree that its theological representatives – some of whom were Serbian bishops – have begun to beg for 'organic' participation and membership in the World Council of Churches, which will supposedly become a new 'Body' and a new 'Church', which will stand above all other churches, in which the Orthodox Churches and the non-orthodox churches will appear only as parts. God forbid! Never before has there been such a betrayal and abandonment of our holy Faith!

"We are renouncing the Orthodox Faith of the God-Man Christ, and organic ties with the God-Man and His Most Holy Body: we are repudiating the Orthodox Church of the holy apostles, the Fathers, and the Ecumenical Councils – and we wish to become 'organic members' of a heretical, humanistic, humanized and man-worshipping club, which consists of 263 heresies – every one of which is a spiritual death.

"As Orthodox Christians we are 'members of Christ.' 'Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute?' (I Corinthians 6.15). We are doing this by our organic union with the World Council of Churches, which is nothing other than the rebirth of atheistic man, of pagan idolatry.

"The time has finally come for the patristic Orthodox Church of Saint Sabbas, the Church of the holy apostles and Fathers, of the holy confessors, martyrs and new-martyrs, to stop mingling ecclesiastically and hierarchically with the so-called 'World Council of Churches', and to cast off forever any participation in joint prayer or services, and to renounce general participation in any ecclesiastical dealings whatsoever, which are not self-contained and do not express the unique and unchangeable character of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church – the Orthodox Church – the only true Church that has ever existed."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *A Time to Choose*, op. cit., p. 47.

<sup>13</sup> *A Time to Choose*, op. cit., p. 53.

ROCOR's attitude towards the Serbian Church now began to change. Thus on September 14/27, 1967, Archbishop Averky of Jordanville wrote to Metropolitan Philaret: "With regard to the question of the Serbian Church, whose Patriarch German is a stooge of the communist Tito, as the Serbs themselves are convinced, calling him 'the red patriarch'. We have heard this from many clergy and laity who have fled from Serbia. How can we recognize, and have communion in prayer with, 'the red patriarch', who maintains the closest friendly relations with red Moscow? Cannot our Hierarchical Council make *erroneous* decisions? Do we in the Orthodox Church have a doctrine about the *infallibility of every Council of Bishops*?"

Archbishop Averky's attitude to the Serbs was confirmed by the ROCOR Council of Bishops in 1967, which resolved to annul the resolution of the Council of Bishops in 1964 on the preservation of prayerful communion with the hierarchy of the Serbian Orthodox Church.<sup>14</sup> And in 1970, St. Philaret announced to the Synod that since the Serbian Patriarch German had chosen to serve as Chairman of the World Council of Churches, ROCOR should avoid joint prayer and service with him, while at the same time not making a major demonstration of the fact...<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, communion with the Serbs continued. For many hierarchs and priests of ROCOR had been brought up in Serbia, and out of gratitude felt that the Serbs should not be condemned or excommunicated. To what extent this attitude was truly motivated by gratitude, and to what extent simply by fear of ROCOR's losing its last friends in "World Orthodoxy", is a moot point. In any case, it was contrary to the canons of the Church, which require the breaking of communion with all those in communion with heresy. Such an act would have been truly loving, for true love for the Serbs dictated that it should be pointed out into what an abyss their ecumenism was leading them, an exhortation which would have acquired greater weight by a full break in communion...

### **The Third All-Diaspora Council**

In September, 1974 the Third All-Emigration Council of ROCOR took place in the monastery of the Holy Trinity in Jordanville, New York. There were fifteen bishops present, together with seventy delegates from the clergy and laity. Just as the First Council, held at Karlovtsy in 1921, had defined the relationship of ROCOR to the Bolshevik regime and the Romanov dynasty; and the Second Council, held in Belgrade in 1938 - her relationship to the Church inside Russia; so the Third Council tried to define her relationship to the ecumenical and dissident movements.

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<sup>14</sup> Psarev, *op. cit.*, p. 4. Bishop Agathangelus of Odessa writes: "Already on May 19 / June 1, 1967 the following resolution marked "Top Secret" was accepted by our Hierarchical Council in connection with [the Serbian Church's] ecumenical activity: 'In addition to the resolution of the present Council of Bishops on relations with the Serbian Orthodox church, the suggestion of his Eminence the First Hierarch and President of the Council of Bishops Metropolitan Philaret has been accepted and confirmed, that all the Reverend Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad should refrain from concelebration with the hierarchy of the Serbian Orthodox Church.' As far as I know, this resolution has never been repealed in a council." (August 21, 2007, <http://guest-2.livejournal.com/294723.html>).

<sup>15</sup> Psarev, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

As St. Philaret, president of the Council, said in his keynote address: "First of all, the Council must declare not only for the Russian flock, but for the entire Church, its concept of the Church; to reveal the dogma of the Church... The Council must determine the place our Church Abroad holds within contemporary Orthodoxy, among the other 'so-called' churches. We say 'so-called' for though now they often speak of many 'churches', the Church of Christ is single and One."<sup>16</sup>

There was much to discuss. In the last decade the apostatic influence of the ecumenical movement had broadened and deepened, and Metropolitan Philaret, had assumed a leading role in the struggle against it through his "Sorrowful Epistles". Under the influence of this leadership, many non-Russians, such as the Greek American Monastery of the Holy Transfiguration in Boston, had sought refuge in ROCOR, and this movement had been strengthened by the application of the two Greek Old Calendarist Synods to enter into communion with her. Bulgarian, Romanian, American, French and Dutch missions had also joined the Church. ROCOR was no longer an exclusively Russian jurisdiction in the make-up of her members, and she could no longer be seen as simply an outpost of Russian Orthodox anti-communism. She was a multi-ethnic, missionary Church fighting the main heresies of the age on a number of fronts throughout the world.

However, such a vision of ROCOR was not shared by all her hierarchs. Some saw the isolation of ROCOR from other local Churches as necessitated, not so much by the struggle against ecumenism, as by the need to preserve *Russianness* among the Russian émigrés. It was not that the preservation of Russianness as such was not an undoubted good: the problem arose when it hindered the missionary witness of the Church to non-Russian believers. Such phyletistic tendencies inevitably led to a loss of Church consciousness in relation to ecumenism, and to a feeling that ROCOR was closer to Russians of the MP, ecumenist though they might be, than to True Orthodox Christians of Greek or French or American origin.<sup>17</sup>

Another cause of division was the stricter attitude that ROCOR was now being forced to adopt towards "World Orthodoxy", the Local Orthodox Churches that participated in the ecumenical movement. Most of the hierarchs had passively acquiesced in Metropolitan Philaret's "Sorrowful Epistles", and in the union with the Greek Old Calendarists. But they began to stir when the consequences of this were spelled out by the "zealots" in ROCOR: no further communion with the new calendarists, the Serbs and Jerusalem. The unofficial leader of this group of bishops was Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, who was supported by Bishop Laurus of Manhattan, Archbishop Philotheus of Germany and Bishop Paul of Stuttgart.<sup>18</sup> His

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<sup>16</sup> Third All-Diaspora Council, 1974, Protocol 1, August 26 / September 8, Synodal Archives, p. 2; quoted in Nun Vassa (Larin) "'Glory be to God, Who did not Abandon His Church', The Self-Awareness of ROCOR at the Third All-Diaspora Council of 1974", <http://www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws/01newstructure/pagesen/articles/svassasobor.htm>, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> See Eugene Pavlenko, "The Heresy of Phyletism: History and the Present", *Vertograd-Inform*, № 13, November, 1999.

<sup>18</sup> Nun Vassa, *op. cit.*

main opponents were Metropolitan Philaret, Archbishops Anthony of Los Angeles and Averky of Syracuse, Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) <sup>19</sup> and the Greek-American Monastery of the Holy Transfiguration in Boston.

Archbishop Anthony of Geneva was a powerful hierarch whom some suspected of having links with the communists because of his remaining in Yugoslavia after the war. According to one source: "In 1945, being in Serbia, he went over to the MP and waited for a Soviet passport so as to go to the USSR, but the Soviet authorities took their time with the passport, bestowing on him in the meantime the rank of archimandrite [through Patriarch Alexis I]. But, fed up with waiting for permission to return, [in 1949] the future bishop left for Switzerland to his brother Bishop Leontius, where he was reunited with ROCOR, having received a penance for his joining the MP." <sup>20</sup> According to another source, however, Archbishop Anthony, then an archimandrite, left Yugoslavia for Switzerland at the invitation of the Lesna monastery in France; and there is no reason to believe that he was ever an agent of the communists.

Be that as it may, and in spite of the fact that he repented of his membership of the MP, Archbishop Anthony proclaimed that the MP was a true Church and was hostile to those who thought otherwise.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, he concelebrated frequently with the heretics of "World Orthodoxy", and even, in 1986, ordered his Paris clergy to concelebrate with the new calendarists in Greece, and not with the Old Calendarists. He was a thorn in the side of Metropolitan Philaret until the latter's death in 1985...

In his address to the Council, entitled "Our Church in the Modern World", Anthony of Geneva declared: "By the example of our First Hierarchs [Anthony and Anastasy] we must carefully preserve those fine threads which bind us with the Orthodox world. Under no circumstances must we isolate ourselves, seeing around us, often imagined, heretics and schismatics. Through gradual self-isolation we will fall into the extremism which our metropolitans wisely avoided, we will reject that middle, royal path which until now our Church has travelled... By isolating ourselves, we will embark upon the path of sectarianism, fearing everyone and everything, we will become possessed with paranoia."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> "In his report to Metropolitan Philaret on 7 December of 1972, Archpriest George Grabbe, who then headed the Synod's External Affairs Department, protested against Bishops Nikon and Laurus having united in prayer with Archbishop Iakovos during the visit of the relics of St. Nicholas to the Greek Church in Flushing, NY. His protest was motivated on the basis of determinations of the ROCOR Councils of Bishops of 1967 and 1971 that its clergy must by all means avoid prayerful communion with hierarchs who were ecumenists, and even more so because ROCOR had accepted clerics who had left these other churches for 'dogmatic reasons'." (Psarev, *op. cit.*, p. 4).

<sup>20</sup> Kirillov, May 15, 2006 <http://elmager.livejournal.com/66190.html?thread=283278>; Bernard le Caro, "A Short Biography of Archbishop Antony (Bartoshevich) of Geneva and Western Europe (+1993)", [http://www.orthodoxengland.org.uk/vl\\_antony\\_b.pdf](http://www.orthodoxengland.org.uk/vl_antony_b.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> Witness of the present writer after conversations with the archbishop in October, 1976.

<sup>22</sup> Archbishop Anthony particularly resented the influence of the Greek Old Calendarists and the Greeks within ROCOR. As he wrote to Protopresbyter George Grabbe after the Council: "To trail along behind the Greek Old Calendarists, taking Fr. Panteleimon for a prophet - this I cannot do.

This somewhat hysterical appeal not to separate from the World Orthodox at just the point when they were embarking upon “super-ecumenism” – that is, recognition not only of other Christian denominations, but also of other religions, including Judaism, Islam and various varieties of paganism now represented at the World Council of Churches- was criticised by Fr. George Grabbe: “The report does not mention to the degree necessary, maybe, that life goes on, and the sickness of ecumenism deepens and widens more and more. Condescension, *oikonomia*, must under different circumstances be applied differently, and to different degrees. In doses too great it can betray the Truth.” Then Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles recalled that “we have many Greek [Old Calendarist] parishes. Our concelebration with the new calendarists was very bitter for them.”<sup>23</sup>

The leader of one of the Greek Old Calendarist parishes within ROCOR, Fr. Panagiotis Carras, sent an appeal to the Synod on August 24, 1974 on behalf of all “non-Russian monasteries, parishes, and laity of ROCOR”, in which he called on the ecumenists to be labelled as heretics who had lost the Holy Spirit and who should be subjected to the canonical sanctions that apply to heretics and schismatics. There was no response to this at the time. But nine years later, in 1983, the ROCOR Council of Bishops did anathematize ecumenism in terms that were dictated, it appears, by the Greeks in ROCOR.<sup>24</sup>

Also discussed at the Council was the phenomenon known as “the dissident movement”. This arose in the second half of the 1960s, as détente developed between the Communist and Capitalist superpowers. It affected both the political sphere (the works of such figures as Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn) and the religious sphere (Solzhenitsyn again, Bishop Hermogenes of Kaluga, the priests Yeshliman, Yakunin and Dudko, the layman Boris Talantov).

Unknown at the time was the adoption of a new long-range global strategy by the Soviet leadership, in which the dissident movement was planned to play an important role. Thus in a memo to the CIA dated 1978 Anatoly Golitsyn wrote: “At the time of the adoption of the long-range strategy in the period 1958 to 1960, there was strong internal opposition to the Soviet régime from dissatisfied workers, collective farmers, intellectuals, clergy, Ukrainian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Jewish nationalists, etc. These oppositionists did not call themselves ‘dissidents’ and nor did the KGB call them ‘dissidents’.

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From my point, I am deeply convinced that this would be a betrayal of the Church. For you and me who used to have such universal teachers as Metropolitan Anthony and Archbishop Gavriil... Now even though we see the absurdities committed by the Greek Old Calendarists, we are still trying to accommodate and placate them, though we ourselves are slipping into a sect, cutting ourselves off from universal unity” (Psarev, *op. cit.*, p. 8).

<sup>23</sup> Protocol № 4 of the All-Diaspora Council, August 29 / September 11, 1974; Synodal Archives, p. 4; Nun Vassa, *op. cit.*

<sup>24</sup> Psarev, *op. cit.*, p. 8

"On the contrary, the KGB and the Party referred to them as 'enemies of the régime'... The KGB was instructed to adopt new methods to deal with this opposition, based on the experience of the GPU (the Soviet political police) under Dzerzhinsky in the 1920s...

"This entailed the creation of a false opposition in the USSR and other countries... The current 'dissident movement' is just such a false opposition designed and created by the KGB...

"The main objectives which the Soviet rulers are trying to achieve through the 'dissident movement' are as follows:

"(a) To confuse, neutralise and dissolve the *true* internal political opposition in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics;

"(b) To prevent the West from reaching the genuine internal opposition in the USSR by introducing to the West a false KGB-controlled opposition. This explains the easy access of the Western media to the alleged 'dissidents';

"(c) To influence the foreign policy of the United States through the 'dissidents' in the interests of the Communist long-term strategy and exploit this issue in the strategy's final phase."<sup>25</sup>

Golitsyn was talking mainly about political dissidents. Nevertheless, as Metropolitan Philaret himself suggested, it may be that some of the church dissidents, too, were, if not signed-up agents, at any rate naïve and unwitting tools in the hands of the enemies of the faith, who permitted all their contacts with the ROCOR because they foresaw the corrosive effect such contacts would have.

Two main streams were discernible in the movement, which may be called, recalling the debates of the nineteenth-century intelligentsia, the Westernisers and the Slavophiles.<sup>26</sup> The Westernisers were mainly concerned to correct abuses within the Church, to re-establish freedom of conscience and freedom of expression. They sought and received much support in the West, and were in turn much influenced by modern western modes of thought, especially – and in this they departed from traditionally Orthodox modes of thought – Ecumenism. The Slavophiles were less well received and understood in the West. Their main emphasis was on the restoration of traditional Russianness – Russian religion, Russian art and architecture, Russian culture in all its forms, which Soviet culture had so damaged and distorted.

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<sup>25</sup> Golitsyn, *The Perestroika Deception*, London and New York: Edward Harle, 1995, p. 175.

<sup>26</sup> See Roman Redlikh, "Rossia, Evropa i Real'nij Sotsializm" (Russia, Europe and Real Socialism), *Grani (Edges)*, 1986, pp. 265-289; Alexander Yanov, *The Russian Challenge*, Oxford: Blackwells, 1987, chs. 2-4; Victor Aksiuchits, "Zapadniki i Pochvenniki Segodnia" (Westernisers and Traditionalists Today), *Vestnik Khristianskogo Informatsionnogo Tsentra (Herald of the Christian Information Centre)*, № 30, September 22, 1989.

The two streams were not always sharply differentiated and could fuse together in the thought and activity of a single man. Thus Alexander Solzhenitsyn, though usually considered to be a Slavophile, nevertheless shared many of the characteristics of the westernizing dissidents, not only in his human rights activity, but also in his Ecumenism. And, purified of their heterodox elements, both streams could be said to tend (unconsciously as yet) towards the True Orthodox Church, which remained more radical and still more courageous in Her confession than the dissidents and more truly representative of the best of Old Russia than the Slavophiles.

The dissident movement within the Church began, among the clergy, with the 1965 open letter of the Priests Nicholas Yeshliman and Gleb Yakunin to President Podgorny, in which they protested against the subservience of the Church to the State, particularly in not resisting the Khrushchev persecution, in giving control of the parishes to the State-controlled dvadsatsky, in the handing over of lists of those baptized to the local authorities, in not letting children and adolescents under 18 participate in church life, and in ordaining only those candidates to the episcopate and priesthood who were pleasing to the Council for Religious Affairs. This letter was ignored by the patriarchate, and in 1966 both priests were forbidden from serving.

Among the laity, the most significant dissident, as we have seen, was the philosopher Boris Talantov, who was imprisoned for exposing the activities of the Kirov Bishop John in the closing of churches and suppression of believers. He was slandered publicly on the BBC by Metropolitan Nicodemus of Leningrad (who also happened to be a KGB agent with the codename "Sviatoslav" and a secret bishop of the Catholic Church!), and was eventually sent to prison in Kirov, where he died in 1971. In an article entitled "Sergianism, or adaptation to atheism", which had the subtitle "The Leaven of Herod", Talantov denounced Metropolitan Sergius' 1927 declaration as a betrayal of the Church, and the MP as "a secret agent of worldwide antichristianity". Sergianism had not only not "saved" the Church, but, on the contrary, had assisted the loss of true ecclesiastical freedom and turned the Church administration into the obedient tool of the atheist authorities. "Metropolitan Sergius," he wrote, "by his adaptation and lies saved nobody and nothing except himself." And in another samizdat article entitled "The Secret Participation of the Moscow Patriarchate in the struggle of the CPSS against the Orthodox Christian Church" he wrote: "The Moscow Patriarchate and the majority of bishops participate in organized activities of the atheist authorities directed to the closing of churches, the limitation of the spreading of the faith and its undermining in our country... In truth the atheist leaders of the Russian people and the princes of the Church have gathered together against the Lord and His Christ".<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Talantov, in "Tserkov' Katakombnaia na zemle Rossijskoj (III)" (The Catacomb Church in the Russian Land (III), *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'* (Orthodox Life), № 12 (635), December, 2002, pp. 10-11.

In 1972, Alexander Solzhenitsyn wrote an open "Lenten Letter" to Patriarch Pimen, describing the patriarchate as being "ruled dictatorially by atheists – a sight never before seen in two millenia!" "The Russian Church," he wrote, "expresses its concern about any evil in distant Africa, while it never has anything at all to say about things which are wrong here at home." And he went on: "By what reasoning is it possible to convince oneself that the planned destruction of the spirit and body of the church under the guidance of atheists is the best way of preserving it? Preserving it for whom? Certainly not for Christ. Preserving it by what means? By falsehood? But after the falsehood by whose hands are the holy sacraments to be celebrated?"<sup>28</sup>

Solzhenitsyn's appeal "not to live by the lie" was seen by some to lead logically to the adoption of a catacomb existence for the Church. Thus Fr. Sergius Zheludkov replied: "What are we to do in such a situation? Should we say: all or nothing? Should we try to go underground, which in the present system is unthinkable? Or should we try somehow to accept the system and for the present use those opportunities that are permitted?"<sup>29</sup> However, Solzhenitsyn himself neither belonged to the Catacomb Church nor even believed in Her existence. And this position eminently suited those hierarchs of ROCOR, such as Anthony of Geneva, whose attitude to events in Russia was dictated as much by political as by spiritual or ecclesiological considerations.<sup>30</sup> They were sincere anti-communists and despised the kowtowing of the MP hierarchs to communism, but would not have dreamed of denying that the MP was a true Church. The position of these hierarchs was threatened by the anti-ecumenist zeal of Metropolitan Philaret, Archbishop Averky and the Boston monastery.

But the expulsion of Solzhenitsyn to the West in 1974 presented them with an opportunity. Archbishop Anthony promptly brought Solzhenitsyn to the Council in Jordanville, where he created a sensation by his rejection of the zealot view and scepticism about the existence of the Catacomb Church. However, Metropolitan Philaret, in his own words, continued "to act more than cautiously in relation to him, and I absolutely do not want to meet him. It seems to me that the affair with him may turn out to be a grandiose farce, with a tragi-comic (or perhaps simply a tragic) end..."<sup>31</sup>

Then Anthony himself read a report calling on ROCOR to support the dissidents, in spite of the fact that they were ecumenists and in the MP. He was countered by Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles, who, while respecting the courage of the dissidents, objected to a recognition that would devalue the witness of the true catacomb confessors.

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<sup>28</sup> Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church*, London: Allen Croom, 1986, p. 304.

<sup>29</sup> Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

<sup>30</sup> Many West European members of ROCOR belonged to the NTS, a secret anti-communist political party which was infiltrated by both the KGB and the CIA.

<sup>31</sup> Metropolitan Philaret, letter to Protopresbyter George Grabbe, in Nun Cassia (Senina), *Stolp Ognennij: Mitropolit N'iu-Yorskij i Vostochno-Amerikanskij Filaret (Voznesensky)* (A Fiery Pillar: Metropolitan Philaret of New York and Eastern America), St. Petersburg, 2007, pp. 170, 192.

Also, St. Philaret moved for an official statement that the MP was graceless. According to the witness of a seminarian present at the Council, the majority of bishops and delegates would have supported such a motion. However, at the last minute the metropolitan was persuaded not to proceed with the motion on the grounds that it would have caused a schism.<sup>32</sup>

Another important dissident was the Moscow priest Fr. Demetrius Dudko, who conducted open meetings in his church that attracted many and influenced many more. Unlike Solzhenitsyn, he knew of the Catacomb Church, and wrote of it in relatively flattering terms: "We all recognize Patriarch Tikhon and we look on Patriarch Sergius' [acts] as a betrayal of the Church's interests to please the authorities. The following (Patriarchs) - Alexis and the present Pimen - only go on the road already opened. We have no other hierarchy. The Catacomb Church would be good - but where is it? The True Orthodox Church - these are good people, morally steadfast; but they have almost no priesthood, and you simply can't find them, while there are many who are thirsting. And one has to be ministered to by the hierarchy we do have. Immediately the question arises: are they ministering to us? Basically, they are the puppets of the atheists. And another question: at least, are they believers? Who will answer this question? I fear to answer..."<sup>33</sup>

Such sentiments were close to the truth, and naturally elicited sympathy in ROCOR. Less well known - because edited out of his books as published in the West<sup>34</sup> - was Fr. Demetrius' ecumenism. The right attitude to him would have been to applaud his courage and the correct opinions he expressed, while gently seeking to correct his liberalism and ecumenism. In no way was it right to treat him as if he were a true priest in the True Church, and an example to be followed that was no less praiseworthy than those of the true confessors in the catacombs.

But that is precisely what many in ROCOR now began to do. Thus the 1974 Council declared: "The boundary between preservation of the Church and seductive self-preservation was drawn by his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, his lawful locum tenens Metropolitan Peter, Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd and the Solovki confessors headed by Archbishop Hilarion (Troitsky). In recent years, this boundary has again been clearly drawn by Archbishop Hermogenes, several priests, among them Nicholas Gainov and Demetrius Dudko, the laypeople of Vyatka led by Boris Talantov, the defenders of the Pochaev Lavra such as Theodosia Kuzminichna Varavva, and many others. This boundary has also been drawn by Solzhenitsyn in his appeal 'Do not live by the lie!' Not to live by the lie and to honour the memory of the holy martyrs and confessors of our Church - this is the boundary separating the true Tikhonites from 'the sergianist leaven of Herod', as wrote Boris Talantov, the rebukers of the present leaders of the patriarchate who died in prison. In our unceasing prayers for each other, in our love

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<sup>32</sup> Fr. Basil Yakimov, "Re: Fundamental Question", [orthodox-synod@yahoo.groups.com](mailto:orthodox-synod@yahoo.groups.com), 4 June, 2003.

<sup>33</sup> *Posev*, July, 1979; translated in *The Orthodox Word*, September-October, 1979.

<sup>34</sup> Personal communication from Monks of Monastery Press, Montreal, January, 1977.

for the Lord Jesus, in our faithfulness to the ideal of the past and future Orthodox Russia, the faithful archpastors, pastors, monks and laymen on both sides of the iron curtain are united. Together they constitute the Holy Church of Russia, which is indivisible just as the seamless robe of Christ is indivisible."<sup>35</sup>

This was a serious distortion: to place the confessors of the Catacomb Church on the same level as "dissident" sergianists. A case could be made for considering that Boris Talantov was a true martyr, since he denounced the MP in terms identical to those employed by the Catacomb Church and may well have died out of communion with the MP. But Dudko and Solzhenitsyn did not share the faith of the True Church, and did not join it even after the fall of communism.<sup>36</sup> Fr. Seraphim Rose, the famous American theologian-ascetic, also criticized the position of Solzhenitsyn and the pro-MP party.<sup>37</sup>

Voices were heard at the 1974 Council arguing for union not only between ROCOR and the MP dissidents, but also between ROCOR and the schismatic Paris and American Metropolia jurisdictions. Love, they said, should unite us, and we should not emphasize our differences. Metropolitan Philaret, however, quoting St. Maximus the Confessor, pointed out that love which does not wish to disturb our neighbour by pointing out his errors is not love but hatred!<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> *Poslanie Tret'ego Vsezarubezhnogo Sobora Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi Zagranitsej Pravoslavnomu russkomu narodu na rodine (Epistle of the Third All-Emigration Council of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad to the Russian People in the Homeland)*, September 8/21, 1974.

<sup>36</sup> In fact, before his death in 2004 Dudko became an open advocate of Stalinism and Putin's neo-Stalinism: "I hope so much for Vladimir Putin now. It seems to me that he is like Joseph Stalin. I treat Stalin with respect, and I think that he was a very wise leader. It is Stalin who established such a powerful country. Russia has never been that powerful since, and there was no tsar in Russia who was able to accomplish the things that Stalin did. He managed to overcome and sacrifice so much for the sake of the country's greatness. I hope that Putin will follow in Stalin's path..." (<http://english.pravda.ru/politics/2002/11/13/39433>; quoted by Nicholas Candela, "[paradosis] the wisdom of an MP priest", [orthodox-tradition@yahoo.com](mailto:orthodox-tradition@yahoo.com), January 22, 2004).

<sup>37</sup> "Let us return to the belief of Solzhenitsyn and all the defenders of the Moscow Patriarchate that the betrayal of her hierarchs does not affect the Church's faithful. This view is based on an *entirely false view of the nature of the Church* which artificially separates the hierarchs from the believing people and allows "church life as normal" to go on no matter what happens to the Church leaders. On the contrary, the whole history of the Church of Christ persuades us of the exact opposite. Who else was it but the Bishops of Rome who led the Church of the West into apostasy and schism and heresy? Is it the fault of ordinary believing Roman Catholics that they, the largest group of "Christians" in the world, are today *outside the Church of Christ*, and that in order to return to the true Church they must not only reject the false doctrines of Rome, but also completely reform their religious mentality and unlearn the false piety which has been transmitted to them precisely by their bishops? Today, it is true, the Moscow Patriarchate allows Roman Catholics to receive its Sacraments and implicitly already teaches the ecumenist doctrine that these Catholics too are "part of the Church". But this fact only shows how far the Moscow Patriarchate has departed from the universal Orthodox tradition of the Church into an erroneous ecclesiology, and how correct the True Orthodox Church is in refusing to have communion with an ecclesiastical body which not only allows its policies to be dictated by atheists, but openly preaches the modern heresies of ecumenism and chiliasm." ("The Catacomb Tikhonite Church 1974", *The Orthodox Word*, 1974, pp. 241-242).

<sup>38</sup> See his letter to Fr. Victor Potapov published in Senina, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-52. St. Maximus the Confessor said in this connection: "I want and pray you to be wholly harsh and implacable with the heretics only in regard to cooperating with them or in any way whatever supporting their deranged

The metropolitan considered the Americans and Parisians to be schismatics in the full sense of the word. He thought that ROCOR's Epistle to them would not have any influence because it treated the schismatics as equals, without any word of rebuke: they should have been exhorted to return to the True Church.<sup>39</sup> And when Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, at another Council, said that ROCOR and the Paris Exarchate had "one common flock", he objected strongly. "What 'common flock' can we have with the Parisians," he wrote to Abbess Magdalina Grabbe of Lesna, "when their head, Archbishop George, when passing by our memorial church in Brussels, spits towards us with the words, 'Ugh, Karlovtsian infection!'... This was seen and heard by my people who were present there... But the exarchate spits not only at our churches, but also at the church order and canons. There they perform marriages on Saturdays and in general whenever they like - so long as they are paid. There they buried an *unbaptized Jew*, as our ROCOR people told us with indignation... What 'common flock' can there be here, and what can we have in common with them? When I was serving in Brussels on a day of mourning, some woman was about to come up to the Chalice. I asked her: had she done confession? Her reply was: "No!" "You cannot have communion." Then she began to raise a tumult: "What's this? All I need is to have a pure conscience", etc... I did not enter into an argument with her, but only thought: "Ach, the Exarchate infection!" She was from the Parisians."<sup>40</sup>

The metropolitan's increasing isolation was expressed in a letter to Fr. George Grabbe: "I saw how truly alone I am among our hierarchs with my views on matters of principle (although on a personal level I am on good terms with everyone). And I am in earnest when I say that I am considering retiring. Of course, I won't leave all of a sudden, unexpectedly. But at the next Sobor I intend to point out that too many things that are taking place in our church life do not sit well with me. And if the majority of the episcopacy agrees with me then I will not raise the matter of retiring. But if I see that I am alone or see myself in the minority then I will announce that I am retiring. For I cannot head, nor, therefore bear the responsibility for that with which I am not in agreement in principle. In particular, I do not agree with our practice of halfway relations with the American and Parisian schismatics. The Holy Fathers insistently state that long and obdurately continuing schism is close to being heresy, and that it is necessary to relate to stubborn schismatics as to heretics, not allowing any communion with them whatsoever (how Vladyka Anthony's hair would stand on end at such a pronouncement! But I remain unyielding)..."<sup>41</sup>

The mid-70s were a critical period when ROCOR's confession of the faith rested in the balance. It was largely due to St. Philaret and the prayers of the Catacomb confessors inside Russia that ROCOR did not fall at this time...

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belief. For I reckon it misanthropy and a departure from Divine love to lend support to error, that those previously seized by it might be even more greatly corrupted." (P.G. 91: 465C).

<sup>39</sup> Senina, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

<sup>40</sup> Senina, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

<sup>41</sup> Senina, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-170.

## *The Fall of the Dissidents*

In 1976 the ROCOR Synod issued an Epistle to the Russian people which, after declaring unity with the Catacomb Church, went on to say to dissident members of the MP: "We also kiss the cross that you have taken upon yourselves, O pastors who have found in yourselves the courage and strength of spirit to be open reproachers of the weakness of spirit of your hierarchs, who have surrendered before the atheists... We know of your exploit, we pray for you and ask your prayers for our flock that is in the diaspora. Christ is in our midst! He is and shall be!"<sup>42</sup>

"Christ is in our midst! He is and shall be!" are words that Orthodox priests exchange in the altar after the ordination of the Holy Gifts. Their use here implies the recognition of the dissidents as co-celebrants with ROCOR, members of the same Church. Clearly the influence of the dissidents was having a corrosive effect on the ecclesiology of ROCOR.

In February, 1976 the Matthewite Greek Old Calendarists broke communion with the Russians, claiming that the Russians had broken their promise to give them a written confession that the new calendarists were graceless<sup>43</sup>, and that Archbishop

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<sup>42</sup> *Pravoslavnaia Rus' (Orthodox Russia)*, 1976, № 20.

<sup>43</sup> The official statements of the ROCOR Synod were indeed weak. Thus on September 12/25, 1974 the Synod declared: "Concerning the question of the presence or absence of grace among the new calendarists the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad does not consider herself or any other Local Church to have the right to make a conclusive decision, since a categorical evaluation in this question can be undertaken only by a properly convened, competent Ecumenical Council, with the obligatory participation of the free Church of Russia." (This was quoted by Metropolitan Philaret in his letter to Archbishop Andreas dated October 5, 1974 (ref. no. 3/50/760)). Again on September 18 / October 1, 1974 the ROCOR Council of Bishops declared: "Manifesting good will [towards the Orthodox Greeks], the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad has called and addressed separate groups of the Church of the Old Calendarists to find the path to make peace and attain fraternal unity. However, the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad has no canonical power over the Church jurisdictions in Greece and therefore cannot interfere in their life with decisions that would be obligatory in questions of their disagreements."

Although ROCOR officially refused to call the new calendarists graceless, there is evidence that Metropolitan Philaret's personal views were stricter and closer to those of the Greeks. Thus on September 20, 1975, he wrote to Metropolitan Epiphanius of Kition, the leader of the Old Calendarist Church of Cyprus, with whom he continued to have friendly relations even after the Matthewite Synod to which Epiphanius belonged had broken communion with ROCOR: "From the beginning our Russian Church has known that the calendar innovation was unacceptable, and has not dared to move this boundary set by patristic tradition, for the Ecclesiastical Calendar is a support of the life of the Church and as such is fortified by decrees of Holy Tradition.

"However, it is obvious to all that the calendar innovation caused a schism in the Greek Church in 1924, and the responsibility for the schism weighs exclusively on the innovators. This is the conclusion that will be reached by anyone studying the Patriarchal *Tomoi* (as that of 1583) and taking into account the wretched and self-evident fact of the schism and the frightful punishments, persecutions and blasphemies which those who have cleaved to the patristic piety of Holy Tradition have undergone.

"Thinking in this way, our Holy Synod has decreed that we 'flee' concelebrations with the new calendarist modernists. We do not concelebrate with them, nor do we give permission or a blessing to our clergy for such a concelebration. In order to assure you of the truth of what we say, we inform you that whenever a community in the diaspora is received into our Church, they are required to

Anthony of Geneva was continuing to have communion with the new calendarists.<sup>44</sup> This was true; and his ecumenist activities continued even after the break with the Matthewites. At Pascha, 1976, he asked permission for pastoral reasons to serve with the Paris Exarchate.<sup>45</sup> In October he again with several heretics at the funeral of Archbishop Nicodemus of Great Britain (the senior priest of the Moscow Patriarchate in London, Fr. Michael Fortounatto, was singing in the choir!). And in May, 1977 he travelled to Birmingham, England to concelebrate with the local Serbs.

The Serbs, as we have seen, had joined the WCC in 1965. Their ecumenism extended to official acceptance of the canonicity of the Anglican Church,<sup>46</sup> and they were as fully under the thumb of the communists as the MP.<sup>47</sup> In spite of this, Archbishop Anthony, continued to serve with the Serbs, citing the pre-war hospitality of the Serbs to ROCOR in his justification.

In this connection Metropolitan Philaret wrote to him in November, 1977: "I consider it my duty to point out to you, Vladyka, that your assertion that we must thank the Serbian Church for her treatment of us, I fully accept, but only as regards her past – the glorious past of the Serbian Church. Yes, of course, we must keep the names of their Holinesses Patriarchs Demetrius and Barnabas in grateful memory for their precious support of the Church Abroad at that time when she had no place to lay her head.

"There is no denying that a certain honour is due the Serbian Church for her refusing to condemn our Church Abroad at the parasynagogue in Moscow in 1971, and also on later occasions when Moscow again raised the matter. But then, on the other hand, she did participate in the aforementioned parasynagogue, when it elected Pimen, and the Serbian hierarchs did not protest against this absolutely anti-canonical election, when he who had already been chosen and appointed by the God-hating regime was elected. Our Sobor of 1971 did not, and could not, recognize Pimen, whereas the Serbian Patriarchate recognized and does recognize him, addressing him as Patriarch, and is in full communion with him. And thus she opposes us directly, for we attempt at all times to explain to the "Free World" that the Soviet Patriarchate is not the genuine representative and head of the much-suffering Russian Church. But the Serbian Church recognizes her as such, and by so doing commits a grave sin against the Russian Church and the Russian Orthodox people.

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follow the patristic Calendar of the Orthodox Church..." (from the archives of the True Orthodox Church of Greece)

<sup>44</sup> Kyrix *Gnision Orthodoxon* (*Herald of the True Orthodox Christians*), February, 1976, pp. 5-12.

<sup>45</sup> Psarev, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>46</sup> Thus George Deretich writes: "In Waukegan, Illinois (Feb. 7, 1980),... the pro-Belgrade Bishop Firmilian stated openly in court under oath that Episcopalian clergy are canonical priests recognized by his Orthodox Church" (*Treacherous Unity*, Acel Officeworks, 1998, p. 68).

<sup>47</sup> The present writer's father was a British diplomat in Belgrade in the 1950s, and he reported that it was generally accepted in the diplomatic community that Patriarch German of Serbia was a member of the Yugoslav communist party.

“How can there be any talk here of a special gratitude to her? Oh, if the Serbian Church would, while recognizing our righteousness, likewise directly and openly, boldly recognize the unrighteousness of the Soviets! Well – then there would truly be something for us to thank her for! But now, as it is, while extending one hand to us, she extends her other hand to our opponents and the enemies of God and the Church. If it pleases you, having shut your eyes to this sad reality, to thank the Serbs for such “podvigs” of theirs, then that is your affair, but I am not a participant in this expression of gratitude.

“How dangerous are compromises in matters of principle! They render people powerless in defence of the Truth. Why is it that the Serbian Patriarchate cannot resolve to sever communion with the Soviet hierarchy? Because she herself is travelling along the same dark and dangerous path of compromise with the God-hating communists. True, she has not progressed along that path to the extent that the Soviet hierarchy has, and she attempts to preach and defend the faith, but if the shades and nuances here are quite different, yet, in principle, the matter stands on one and the same level”.<sup>48</sup>

Archbishop Anthony’s ecumenist actions caused several priests and parishes to leave him for the Matthewites, including those of Fr. Basile Sakkas in Switzerland and of Hieromonk Cassian (Braun) in France, and a parish in England. Metropolitan Philaret expressed disapproval of Archbishop Anthony’s canonical transgressions, and even obtained the removal of the British diocese from his jurisdiction. But he was not in sufficient control of his Synod to obtain his repentance.<sup>49</sup>

In 1976 the Brotherhood of St. Herman of Alaska in Platina, California began to turn away from its previously zealot course to a markedly softer line in relation to the MP and World Orthodoxy.<sup>50</sup> They were influenced in this direction partly by the “dissident fever” that was now raging through most of ROCOR, and partly by the “moderate” ecclesiology of the Greek Old Calendarist Metropolitan Cyprian of Fili.

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<sup>48</sup> Senina, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

<sup>49</sup> As he told the present writer in January, 1977, *he had a gun at his head*. And while he obtained the removal of Archbishop Anthony from the British diocese, Anthony was able to place one of his own supporters, Archimandrite Alexis (Pobjoy), as administrator of the diocese. Pobjoy promptly called on the English Orthodox Parish of St. Michael in Guildford to repent to Anthony of their confession against his ecumenism, and anathematized them when they refused, forcing them to flee to the Greek Old Calendarists.

<sup>50</sup> See especially Fr. Seraphim Rose’s article, “The Royal Path” (*The Orthodox Word*, № 70, 1976), in which he wrote: “The Russian Church Outside of Russia has been placed, by God’s Providence, in a very favourable position for preserving the ‘royal path’ amidst the confusion of so much of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Orthodoxy. Living in exile and poverty in a world that has not understood the suffering of her people, she has focused her attention on preserving unchanged the faith which unites her people, she has focused her attention on preserving unchanged the faith which unites her people, and so quite naturally she finds herself a stranger to the whole ecumenical mentality, which is based on religious indifference and self-satisfaction, material affluence, and soulless internationalism. On the other hand, she has been preserved from falling into extremism on the ‘right side’ (such as might be a declaration that the Mysteries of the Moscow Patriarchate are without grace)... If there seems to be a ‘logical contradiction’ here... it is a problem only for rationalists; those who approach church questions with the heart as well as the head have no trouble accepting this position...”

However, a still more important influence may have been a series of controversies – on evolution, on the soul after death, on Blessed Augustine of Hippo – conducted exclusively in the “convert” part of ROCOR between the Platina Brotherhood and the Greek-American monastery in Boston. In all these controversies, in the present writer’s opinion, Platina was right as against Boston. But the negative impression that the Platina monks formed of Boston as a result led them into error in the one area of controversy in which the Boston monastery was right – the canonical status of World Orthodoxy and the MP. Arguing that the Boston monastery’s “super-correctness” was leading them to abandon the “Royal Way” as regards the status of the World Orthodox, Platina came out strongly on the side of the liberal wing of ROCOR led by Archbishop Anthony and his idolisation of Fr. Demetrius and the other dissidents.

In 1979, in response to a series of protests by Fr. Demetrius against what he saw as excessive strictness on the part of ROCOR towards the MP, Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, breaking the rule imposed by Metropolitan Anastasy (and reasserted by Metropolitan Philaret) that ROCOR members should have no contact, “even of an everyday nature”, with Soviet church clergy, wrote to Dudko: “I hasten to console you that the part of the Russian Church which lives in freedom beyond the bounds of the homeland, has never officially considered the Moscow Patriarchate, which is recognised in the USSR, as graceless.... We have never dared to deny the grace-filled nature of the official church, for we believe that the sacraments carried out by her clergy are sacraments. Therefore our bishops received your clergy into the Church Abroad in their existing rank... On the other hand, the representatives of the Catacomb Church in Russia accuse us of not wanting to recognise the Moscow Patriarchate as graceless.”<sup>51</sup> However, in 1980, Fr. Demetrius was arrested, which was closely followed by the arrest of his disciples Victor Kapitanchuk and Lev Regelson. Then Dudko issued a recantation on Soviet television in which he confessed that his “so-called struggle with godlessness” was in fact “a struggle with Soviet power”. Kapitanchuk and Regelson confessed to having “criminal ties” with foreign correspondents and of mixing religious activity with politics, while Kapitanchuk said that he had “inflicted damage on the Soviet state for which I am very sorry”. Both men implicated others in their “crimes”.

Metropolitan Philaret had been proved right – although many continued to justify Dudko and denounced those who “judged” him. But it was not a question of “judging”, but of the correct discerning of the boundaries of the Church and the correct attitude to those outside it. The metropolitan wrote that the tragedy had overtaken Dudko because his activity had taken place from within the MP – that is, “outside the True Church”. And he continued: “What is the ‘Soviet church’? Fr. Archimandrite Constantine has said often and insistently that the most terrible thing that the God-fighting authorities have done to Russia is the appearance of the ‘Soviet church’, which the Bolsheviks offered up to the people as the True Church, having driven the real Orthodox Church into the catacombs or the concentration camps.

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<sup>51</sup> *Vestnik Zapadno-Evropejskoj Eparkhii (Herald of the Western European Diocese)*, 1979, № 14; *Posev (Sowing)*, 1979, № 12.

This false church has been twice anathematised. His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon and the All-Russian Church Council anathematised the communists and all their co-workers. This terrible anathema has not been lifted to this day and preserves its power, since it can be lifted only by an All-Russian Church Council, as being the canonically higher Church authority. And a terrible thing happened in 1927, when the leader of the Church, Metropolitan Sergius, by his shameful apostate declaration submitted the Russian Church to the Bolsheviks and declared that he was cooperating with them. In the most exact sense the expression of the prayer before confession was fulfilled: 'fallen under his own anathema'! For in 1918 the Church anathematised all the co-workers of communism, and in 1927 she herself entered into the company of these co-workers and began to praise the red God-fighting authorities – to praise the red beast of which the Apocalypse speaks. And this is not all. When Metropolitan Sergius published his criminal declaration, the faithful children of the Church immediately separated from the Soviet church, and the Catacomb Church was created. And she in her turn anathematised the official church for her betrayal of Christ...

We receive clergymen from Moscow not as ones possessing grace, but as ones receiving it by the very act of union. But to recognize the church of the evil-doers as the bearer and repository of grace – that we, of course, cannot do. For outside of Orthodoxy there is *no* grace; and the Soviet church has deprived itself of grace."<sup>52</sup>

Looking at this tragedy from a psychological point of view, we can see that Dudko's vulnerability consisted, not so much in the fear of physical torture, as in the KGB's ability to induce in him a feeling of false guilt, guilt that he had objectively harmed the Soviet State. This tragedy exposed an inescapable dilemma facing all the dissidents: that action aimed to restore the freedom of the Church was necessarily anti-soviet, insofar as the Soviet State and the Orthodox Church represented incompatible aims and ideologies. Therefore every committed campaigner for Church freedom sooner or later had to admit that he was working against Soviet power – if not by physical, at any rate by spiritual, means, and that he had to work outside the political and ecclesiastical institutions of Soviet power. So the failure of the dissidents was the natural consequence of the refusal to obey the Apostle's command: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (II Corinthians 6.14). They refused to obey Patriarch Tikhon's adjuration to the faithful to have no

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<sup>52</sup> Senina, *op. cit.*, pp. 195-198, 200. A few years earlier, on August 14/27, 1977, Metropolitan Philaret told the present writer: "I advise you, Vladimir, always to remain faithful to the anathema of the Catacomb Church against the Moscow Patriarchate." And the following is an extract from Protocol № 3 of the ROCOR Sobor, dated October 8/21, 1974: "Bishop Gregory says that to the question of the existence (of grace) it is not always possible to give a final reply immediately. The loss of grace is the consequence of spiritual death, which sometimes does not come immediately. Thus plants sometimes die gradually. In relation to the loss of grace in the Moscow Patriarchate, it would be interesting to make the comparison with the position of the iconoclasts, although the sin of the Patriarchate is deeper. The President [Metropolitan Philaret] says that we cannot now issue a resolution on grace in the Moscow Patriarchate, but we can be certain that grace lives only in the true Church, but the Moscow hierarchs have gone directly against Christ and His work. How can there be grace among them? The metropolitan personally considers that the Moscow Patriarchate is graceless." (*Tserkovnie Novosti (Church News)*, № 4 (95), June-July, 2001, p. 9).

communion at all with the communists, "the outcasts of humanity". They tried to do good from within an accursed evil - the pact between Metropolitan Sergius and the Communists which, in the words of a samizdat document dating from the early 1970s, "tied the Church hand and foot by imposing on her a loyalty not only to the State, *but mainly to the communist ideology*."<sup>53</sup>

### *The Anathema against Ecumenism*

Two ecumenical events combined to elicit a powerful response from ROCOR at this time. The first took place in 1982, when an inter-denominational eucharistic service was composed at a conference in Lima, Peru, in which the Protestant and Orthodox representatives to the WCC agreed that the baptism, eucharist and ordinations of *all* denominations were valid and acceptable.<sup>54</sup> The second came in 1983, at the Vancouver General Assembly of the WCC, which began with a pagan rite performed by local Indians and contained prayer services in which Orthodox hierarchs as well as representatives of many non-Christian religions took part.

The Vancouver Assembly began with a pagan rite carried out by local Indians around a totem pole that was raised by several members of the Assembly, including Bishop Cyril (Gundyaev) of Vyborg, the present Patriarch of Moscow.<sup>55</sup> The Assembly unanimously approved a statement entitled "My Neighbor's Faith and Mine, Theological Discoveries Through Interfaith Dialogue: A Study Guide" (Geneva: WCC, 1986). After claiming the need for "a more adequate theology of religions," the statement declared "that in Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word, the entire human family has been united to God in an irrevocable bond and covenant. The saving presence of God's activity in all creation and human history comes to its focal point in the event of Christ. . . because we have seen and experienced goodness, truth, and holiness among followers of other paths and ways than that of Jesus Christ..., we find ourselves recognizing a need to move beyond a theology which confines salvation to the explicit personal commitment to Jesus Christ."

When the Greek Old Calendarist Metropolitan Gabriel of the Cyclades attempted to address the Vancouver Assembly, he was not allowed to speak by the ecumenists. The *New York Times*, however, published his report, which included the following words: "Modern ecumenism is the reflection of the latest radical, atheistic and anti-Christian anthropomorphism which has as its principle that God is as necessary to man as man is to God. This radical anthropomorphism continues to struggle through the WCC to make the salvific message of Christ simply a servile element of the socio-political and earthly needs of man. Thus it struggles for the actualisation of the unity of the Christian world without Christ, who is 'the Way, the Truth and the Life' of the Church and the faithful. Dogmatic and ethical minimalism, spiritual nihilism, humanistic pacifism and horizontal social activism lead to a union of the Christian

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<sup>53</sup> *Archives* 12/92, № 8926 March 29, 1972, in *Orthodox Life*, September-October, 1974.

<sup>54</sup> See Archbishop Vitaly, "The 1983 Sobor of Bishops", *Orthodox Christian Witness*, August 20 / September 2, 1984, p. 4.

<sup>55</sup> Senina, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

world without Christ. So these attempts of the WCC constitute the modern blasphemy of the Holy Spirit par excellence and declare a deep crisis of faith in the Western Christian world..."<sup>56</sup>

The Synod of ROCOR, also meeting in Canada, condemned this latest and most extreme manifestation of ecumenism as follows: "In its decision of 28 July / 10 August, our Council explained that the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia does not participate in the World Council of Churches insofar as the latter attempts to represent those assembled in it, representatives of religions differing in their opinions, as though they had some sort of unity in faith. In reality, though, this very position is a lie, inasmuch as they, members of various confessions and sects, have not given up their points of disagreement with each other, much less with the Orthodox Church, in dogmas and in fundamental attitudes. In the name of unifying formulas, these differences of opinion are not destroyed, but are just set aside. Instead of the unshakable truths of the faith, they try to see only opinions, not obligatory for anyone. In reply to the confession of the one Orthodox Faith, they say together with Pilate: 'What is truth?' And the nominally Orthodox members of the Ecumenical Movement more and more deserve the reproach of the Angel of the Church of Laodicea: 'I know your works: you are neither hot nor cold: O if only you were hot or cold' (Revelation 3.15). A clear manifestation of such false union was the serving of the so-called Lima Liturgy..."

Then the Synod anathematized ecumenism, declaring: "To those who attack the Church of Christ by teaching that Christ's Church is divided into so-called 'branches' which differ in doctrine and way of life, or that the Church does not exist visibly, but will be formed in the future when all 'branches' or sects or denominations, and even religions will be united in one body; and who do not distinguish the priesthood and mysteries of the Church from those of the heretics, but say that the baptism and eucharist of heretics is effectual for salvation; therefore to those who knowingly have communion with these aforementioned heretics or advocate, disseminate, or defend their new heresy of Ecumenism under the pretext of brotherly love or the supposed unification of separated Christians, **Anathema**."<sup>57</sup>

The Anathema against Ecumenism was seized upon with delight by the True Orthodox not only in ROCOR, but also in Greece and on Mount Athos, and may be considered the single most important ecclesiastical act of the True Orthodox Church in the second half of the twentieth century. For many who had been worried that ROCOR was not being firm and clear enough in her dealings with the ecumenists, it put an end to their doubts and reaffirming their faith in her at a time when the Greek

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<sup>56</sup> "Orthodox Reactions to the Aims of the World Council of Churches", *The New York Times*, August 16, 1983. Minor changes have been made in the wording of the article, which was obviously translated from the Greek by a non-native English speaker.

<sup>57</sup> See "A Contemporary Patristic Document", *Orthodox Christian Witness*, November 14/27, 1983, p. 3; "Encyclical Letter of the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 33, № 6, November-December, 1983, p. 13; Bishop Hilarion of Manhattan, "Answers to Questions Posed by the Faithful of the Orthodox Parish in Somerville, South Carolina", Sunday of the Myrrhbearers, 1992.

Old Calendarist Church was going through a very difficult period. However, the anathema did not spell out precisely which bodies fell under it and were therefore outside the True Church; and this weakness was exploited by those who, for one reason or another, did not want to see a clear and unambiguous frontier marked out between the Church of Christ and the Church of the Antichrist.<sup>58</sup>

Nevertheless, the implication of this anathema was clear: all Orthodox Churches that were fully participating members of the WCC fell under it. As I.M. writes: "There is no heresy without heretics and their practical activity. The WCC in its declarations says: The Church confesses, the Church teaches, the Church does this, the Church does that. In this way the WCC witnesses that it does not recognize itself to be simply a council of churches, but the one church. And all who are members of the WCC are members of this one false church, this synagogue of Satan. And by this participation in the WCC all the local Orthodox churches fall under the ROCOR anathema of 1983 and fall away from the True Church. In their number is the Moscow Patriarchate..."<sup>59</sup>

ROCOR priest Alexander Lebedev attacked the validity of the anathema, calling the idea that the anathema strikes down all ecumenists "the heresy of universal jurisdiction".

The present writer replied to Fr. Alexander: "... It seems to me that you confuse two things: the Church as an external organisation, and the Church as a mystical organism, to use the terminology of Hieromartyr Catacomb Bishop Mark (Novoselov) (+1938). It seems to me that you are right as regards the Church as an external organisation, but wrong as regards the Church as a mystical organism. Let me explain.

"An anathema excludes the person anathematized from the holy mysteries, from membership of the Holy Church. In the first place, of course, that applies to the local Church of which that person is a member. It applies to other Churches only to the extent that the leaders of those other Churches agree with the original anathema and "sign up to it", as it were. Thus the heretic Arius was originally anathematized by the Bishop of Alexandria, which meant that he was excluded from receiving the sacraments throughout the Church of Alexandria. However, not all the bishops of neighbouring Churches agreed with this anathema, so Arius was able to receive communion in other Local Churches. To this extent the anathema was only of local significance. It required the convening of the First Ecumenical Council before Arius was anathematized "universally" - and even then, the anathema was not universally received, as the history of the Church in the next fifty years demonstrates.

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<sup>58</sup> See "Epi Enos Anathematos" (On An Anathema), *Kirix Gnision Orthodoxon (Herald of the True Orthodox Christians)*, February, 1984, pp. 47-56.

<sup>59</sup> "Iskazhenie dogmata 'O edinstve Tserkvi' v ispovedaniakh very Sinodom i Soborom Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi Zagranitsej" (Distortion of the Dogma 'On the Unity of the Church' in the Confessions of Faith of the Synod and Sobor of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad) (MS).

"It is a different matter when we consider an anathema sub specie aeternitatis, in its mystical, super-terrestrial significance. From that point of view, the anathematization of a heretic begins in the heavens. Thus even before Arius had been "locally" anathematized by St. Alexander of Alexandria, the Lord appeared to his predecessor, St. Peter, with a torn cloak, and in answer to St. Peter's question: "O Creator, who has torn Thy tunic?", replied: "The mindless Arius; he has separated from Me people whom I had obtained with My Blood" (St. Demetrius of Rostov, *Lives of the Saints*, November 25). So not only Arius, but all those who followed him, had been separated from the Church by the anathema of Her First Bishop, the Lord Jesus Christ, years (or rather, aeons) before even the first "local" anathema had been uttered. All heresies and heretics are anathematized "from all eternity" by the eternal Lord, for just as every truth is approved by the Truth Himself from all eternity, so is every lie condemned by Him from all eternity, being condemned with "the father of lies" to the gehenna of fire (Revelation 22.15).

"The task of hierarchs on earth is to discern the decisions of the heavenly Church, and then apply these heavenly decisions on earth, in space and time. As St. Bede the Venerable (+735) writes: "The keys of the Kingdom designate the actual knowledge and power of discerning who are worthy to be received into the Kingdom, and who should be excluded from it as being unworthy" (Sermon on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, *P.L.* 94, col. 219). From this point of view, it matters not a jot whether a heretic is anathematized locally or universally, since he has already been anathematized by the heavenly Church. Or rather, it matters in this sense: that if the heretic has been anathematized locally, but this anathema is not accepted by the rest of the Church, then the rest of the Church is under the grave danger of falling under this same anathema. For the local anathema, if it is just, is the reflection of a heavenly anathema; and the anathema of the heavenly Church is universal....

"This explains why, when local Churches anathematized a heresy, they never qualified the anathema (as you, Fr. Alexander, would like to qualify ROCOR's anathema against ecumenism) by saying: "but of course, this applies only to the heretics in our local Church". On the contrary: history shows that local Churches freely anathematized heretics, not only in their own Churches, but also in others. Thus Nestorius, a heretic of the Church of Constantinople, was first condemned by a local Synod of the Church of Rome under St. Celestine; the Monothelite heretics were first condemned by a local Synod, again, of the Church of Rome; and the Papist heretics were first condemned by a local Synod of the Church of Constantinople.

"Consider what St. Maximus said of the Monothelites: "In addition to having excommunicated themselves from the Church, they have been deposed and deprived of the priesthood at the local council which took place recently in Rome. What Mysteries, then, can they perform? Or what spirit will descend upon those who are ordained by them?" Note that the saint says that the heretics have excommunicated themselves; for as the Apostle Paul writes, "he that is such is subverted, and sins, being condemned of himself" (Titus 3.11). But the heretics' self-condemnation and self-exclusion from the Church as a mystical organism must be

followed by their exclusion from the Church as an external organization, lest others be infected with their heresy. Hence the need for councils of bishops to anathematize them, following the rule: "A heretic after the first and second admonition reject" (Titus 3.10), and: "If he refuses to listen to the Church, let him be unto you as a heathen and a publican" (Matthew 18.17). And clearly St. Maximus considered that the anathema of the local Church of Rome had validity throughout the Ecumenical Church.

"Administrative matters and moral falls are the business of local Churches and councils. However, heresies of their very nature are of universal significance, having the potential to infect the whole Church. That is why the appearance of a heresy in one local Church is not the business only of that local Church, but of all the local Churches - and every local Church can and must anathematize it.

"Even the anathema of single bishopric has universal power and validity if it is uttered in the Holy Spirit, in accordance with the eternal Truth. Thus in 1069 the bishops of the metropolitanate of York, in the north of England, solemnly anathematized both the Pope of Rome and his stooge, William the conqueror, the first papist king of England. All the evidence is that they did not know that the Church of Constantinople had already anathematized Rome in 1054. So they were not simply confirming the word of a higher authority. They did not need a higher authority. They were successors of the apostles, with the power to bind and to loose. And they used that power, not for personal gain (on the contrary: they paid for their boldness with their lives), even against the most senior bishop in Christendom...

"In the same way, in 1983 the Sobor of Bishops of the Russian Church Abroad, using the power to bind and to loose given them by the Bishop of bishops, the Lord Jesus Christ, translated onto earth, into space and time, the completely binding and universally applicable decision already arrived at from all eternity by the Council of the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Ecumenism is, was and always will be a heresy, indeed "the heresy of heresies", and the ecumenist heretics are, were and always will be outside the Church, the mystical Body of Christ. The decision of the ROCOR Sobor in 1983, confirmed with no change to its universal wording in 1998, expelled these already self-condemned and Divinely condemned heretics also from the external organization of the Church - and woe to any man, of whatever Church, who despises that decision, for he will then surely fall under the same anathema..."<sup>60</sup>

One ROCOR hierarch rejected this decision - Archbishop Anthony of Geneva. Since 1974, as we have seen, he was the leader of the faction opposing any hardening of ROCOR's attitude towards "World Orthodoxy". Now he ordered the Paris Mission of ROCOR, led by Archimandrite Ambroise Frontier, to concelebrate with new calendarists, and not with Old Calendarists, when in Greece - which caused the whole mission to leave ROCOR and join the Greek Old Calendarists. He was even

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<sup>60</sup> V. Moss, "Re: [paradosis] The Heresy of Universal Jurisdiction", [orthodox-tradition@egroups.com](mailto:orthodox-tradition@egroups.com), October 12, 2000.

accused of giving communion to Roman Catholics.<sup>61</sup> After the Paris mission left him, Archbishop Anthony began to distribute epistles and “explanations” written by him with the aim of justifying the concelebrations with clergy of the “official churches” that were taking place in his diocese. Unfortunately, the ROCOR Synod was by now too weak to check his harmful influence...

For the great rock of Orthodoxy who had restrained ROCOR from falling into sergianism and ecumenism, St. Philaret, has passed to a better world on November 8/21, 1985. And with his passing the defences against heresy crumbled... This is not surprising if we consider how isolated he was in his own Synod. Even his confidant and close assistant, the conservative Bishop Gregory (Grabbe), would not go so far as him in his condemnation of World Orthodoxy and the MP. As Bishop Gregory’s daughter, Matushka Anastasia Shatilova, recalls: “[St. Philaret] had especially many quarrels with Archbishop Anthony of Geneva... mainly on ecumenist questions... with the Serbs, the Antiochians and all kinds... Unfortunately, Archbishop Anthony was distinguished for his very sharp character and wrote several very boorish letters, to which the Metropolitan replied a little sharply... Vladyka Gregory was distinguished by somewhat greater diplomacy and was afraid that to speak in this way could create too great problems... [and] restrained the declarations of the Holy Hierarch Philaret concerning the lack of grace in the MP. For example, he used to say: ‘... tell 60 million Russian people that they are not chrismated, and have been baptized only according to the laymen’s rite...; The Metropolitan was prepared to say this, but Vladyka Gregory thought that for the sake of Church construction it would be more correct not to put it so sharply...”<sup>62</sup>

And yet the Anathema against Ecumenism was now in the Service of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, and thundered out every Orthodoxy Sunday. St. Philaret had done his job; and his incorrupt relics and the frequent miracles performed at his intercession testified that it was a job very well done. From now and to eternity the Anathema stands as a witness to the eternal truth that the Truth is One and the Church is One, and all those who reject it are outside that Truth and that Church...

*Vladimir Moss.  
January 12/25, 2012.*

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<sup>61</sup> Thus Matushka Susanna Maklakov writes: “Although the majority of bishops in the Russian Synod in the 80s were *not* in favor of ecumenism and ecumenistic policies (such as giving communion to RCs), Vladyka Anthony of Geneva persisted in this practice and practically ordered his priests to do so also. Fr. Andrew Maklakov was one of them. He of course got on the phone with Metropolitan Philaret and Bishop Gregory Grabbe, who assured him that this position was not correct and that he did not have to obey Archbishop Anthony. So Fr. Andrew defied AB Anthony of Geneva and refused to communicate RCs who asked for Holy Communion in the parishes that Fr. Andrew served in (which were Rome, Baden-Baden, Munich and Copenhagen). We were in Europe from April 1984 until June 1986. During that time, Fr. Andrew never communicated RCs and I am proud of him for his traditionalist Orthodox stance on that issue. Vladyka Anthony of Geneva is an ecumenist. Period. During that time, he was known to concelebrate with certain uniate groups in Rome, allowing seminarians and monastics on the kliros and into the altar freely. I know this firsthand and no one can convince me otherwise...” (personal communication to Fr. Daniel, November 9, 2005).

<sup>62</sup> Quoted by Fr. Roman Pavlov.